## **Executive Summary**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	The segment of the Mississippi [River] flowing through the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area has always been of major significance as a resource, a boundary, a transportation corridor, a source of sustenance and energy, a place for recreation, an artistic inspiration, and a tourist attraction. It has been a home and work place, a source of water, and a sometime sewer. Demands upon it have often been in conflict, and attempts to manage its resources have frequently challenged state agencies, local governments, organizations, and area citizens.
9 10 11	-Minnesota National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) Comprehensive Management Plan, 1995
12 13	<u>Introduction</u>
14	In January 1997, a Joint and Cooperative Agreement (JCA) was entered into by the cities of
15	Minneapolis, St. Paul, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights, St. Anthony, and the Minneapolis Park and
16	Recreation Board. The 1997 JCA replaced an existing agreement executed in 1985 that created
17 18	the Middle Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization (MMRWMO).
19	As part of their legal requirements, the MMRWMO is required to develop a Watershed
20	Management Plan. This Plan is intended to meet and, whenever possible, exceed the water
21	resource protection requirements under Minnesota Statutes 103A through 103G in conformance
22	with Minnesota Rules Chapters 8410 and 8420. These requirements include protection of
23	surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, and related natural resources. The MMRWMO is
24	committed to the optimum utilization of geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing,
25	the Internet, and other innovative technologies in its management of the watershed. These
26	technologies offer great potential to inform citizens, elected officials, and watershed staff.
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28	The essential purpose of the MMRWMO is to provide for the wise, long-term management of
29	the water and associated land resources within the Middle Mississippi River Watershed
30	(MMRW) through implementation measures that realize multiple objectives, respect ecosystem
31	principles, and reflect community values. The MMRWMO will protect, enhance and restore the

surface and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction through education, management and

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enforcement.

1 The Mississippi River is the common focus of the MMRWMO. Within the boundary of the

2 MMRW, all surface water either directly or indirectly drains to the river. The river itself provides

a wide range of functions and activities such as: hydroelectricity; barge access; recreational

4 water-related amenities; industrial, commercial and residential land uses; public drinking water;

and, storm water and municipal wastewater discharge. The MMRWMO encompasses 13,602

6 acres (31.5 square miles) of fully developed urban lands and waters within the Minneapolis/St.

Paul metropolitan area. As seen on Map 1, the MMRWMO consists of portions of the cities of

8 Lauderdale, Falcon Heights, Minneapolis, St. Anthony, and St. Paul as well as property owned

by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). It is important to note that 93.7%

10 94.1% of the watershed is within the City of Minneapolis. The MMRW is the home of significant

industrial, commercial, and residential activities in the Twin Cities, including river-related

recreation.

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14 The first draft of MMRWMO Watershed Management Plan was published in December 1986.

15 The 1986 Plan was prepared to meet the then current Minnesota Chapter 509 requirements.

The 1986 Plan addressed surface water quality and quantity, land use, and storm sewer

drainage but was never approved by the existing Commission. The 1986 Plan identified

significant point and non-point source pollution in the MMRW and it noted significant

19 groundwater pollution problems from past industrial and commercial practices. Since the writing

of the first draft, there have been several significant changes in state and federal rules and

regulations. These changes have made it necessary to create a new document.

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This current Plan expands the water resource management issues to include groundwater

quality protection and improvement, in addition to the goals of surface water protection and

water quality improvement. In many ways this plan is similar to "Second Generation 509 Plans."

This Plan uses information and data from past studies and actions to address a variety of issues

determined as significant by the MMRWMO Task Force, the MMRWMO Citizens Advisory

28 Committee (CAC), the MMRWMO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Board of

29 Commissioners. Individual This Plan is subdivided into several sections, each addressing the

items required by Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410.

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1 2	<u>Historical Background</u>
3	For thousands of years, the Mississippi River Valley has provided ample hunting, fishing, and
4	gathering opportunities as well as a documented sense of spirituality for indigenous peoples. In
5	the summer of 1680, Father Louis Hennepin and other members of the LaSalle expedition
6	became the first Europeans to see the MMRW and, most notably, St. Anthony Falls. Two-
7	hundred years later, at the time of the United States' acquisition of the Mississippi, the worth of
8	the area was measured primarily in terms of military strategy and transportation potential.
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10	It was St. Anthony Falls that provided the force to shape the urban landscape that now
11	dominates the MMRW. By 1849, the first sawmill was operating in the fledgling village of St.
12	Anthony on the east bank of the river (Stipanovich, 1982). Using power from the St. Anthony
13	Falls, industry prospered. In the 1860's, gristmills began replacing the sawmills and the area
14	soon became the largest flour-milling district in the world (MN Historical Society website, 1999).
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16	During the mid to late 1800's the area around St. Anthony Falls underwent tremendous growth
17	as immigrants and other settlers filled the demand for workers. The river itself suffered severe
18	indignities during this period of rapid human development. However, since that time,
19	modifications in infrastructure and stricter government regulation have helped the river to
20	rebound.
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22	Land Use and Water Resource Inventory & Assessment of Problems
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24	The existing inventory of:
25 26 27 28 29 30 31	<ul> <li>Pollutant sources and polluted sites;</li> <li>Water resources and water uses;</li> <li>Land resources and land uses;</li> <li>Fisheries and wildlife habitats;</li> <li>Weather fluxes and cycles;</li> <li>Policy guidelines;</li> <li>Urban influence;</li> </ul>
32 33 34 35	<ul><li>Infrastructure;</li><li>Scenic areas; and</li><li>Historic sites,</li></ul>

provides the framework within which the MMRWMO must implement its programs, policies, and projects. These factors and others have a direct effect on the quality and function of the

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watershed. Understanding these factors in a present and future context will help to ensure that resources allocated towards watershed improvements today will ensure positive and (hopefully) quantifiable returns in the future.

## Mission and Goals

- The MMRWMO will provide for the long-term management of its water and associated land resources through the development and implementation of projects, programs, and policies that respect ecosystem principles and reflect changing community values. The MMRWMO will assist and cooperate with member cities, other government agencies, non-profit agencies, and communities in managing its water resources to:
  - Protect and preserve natural surface and groundwater storage and retention systems;
  - Identify and implement actions that protect and improve surface and groundwater quality;
  - Identify and implement actions that are needed to cost-effectively correct flooding problems;
  - Reduce soil erosion into surface water systems;
  - Promote groundwater recharge;
  - Work toward a watershed environment that supports a diversity of plant and wildlife communities;
  - Enhance opportunities for recreational opportunities and public access to the Mississippi riverfront; and,
  - Preserve and communicate the history of the inter-relationship between human settlement and the water resources of the MMRW, particularly the Mississippi River.

This plan also sets out the The fifteen specific goals for the programs, policies, and projects of the MMRWMO are outlined in Section 5. The goals of the MMRWMO are divided into eight sections parts (in no particular order): surface water quantity; surface water quality; recreation; public participation; groundwater; wetlands; erosion and sediment control; land use; and, historical and cultural resources.

## <u>Implementation Program</u>

The MMRWMO has established an implementation plan to address the need to both protect and improve water quality. Implementation will focus on three areas: policies and standards, programs, and projects. Section 6 provides further detail on this implementation. The Plan also directs its member communities to implement the MMRWMO policies and standards through local plans and ordinances. A summary of these responsibilities can be found in Table 13.

The MMRWMO acknowledges the limited financial resources of its member communities. To address this, the Plan and the 1997 Joint and Cooperative Agreement (JCA) identify several cost-effective strategies. These include implementation of policies and standards by local governments, and development of criteria to assist in evaluation of project readiness and effectiveness.

 The MMRWMO does not issue permits or provide approval letters for construction projects but relies on the existing permitting and enforcement bodies of its member communities. The MMRWMO Board of Commissioners reserves the right to review and comment on plans that affect the quality and quantity of water within and across its watershed and sub-watershed boundaries. In addition to the following policies and standards, local governments are responsible for: maintaining existing and proposed storm drain conveyance systems, including stormwater detention ponds, sewers, inlet and outlet drainage structures; issuing building and grading permits; and, performing inspections to ensure compliance during construction.

## **Impact on Other Units of Government**

This Plan is only one of several that have been assembled as a means to address watershed issues within the MMRW either directly or indirectly. Coordination with these plans and the entities that drafted them is imperative to successful watershed management. No longer do government agencies manage resources alone. A complex network of federal, state, regional, and municipal agencies must work together to achieve mutual goals in order to make the best use of resources and ensure that policies, projects, and programs stemming from a variety agencies are complementary instead of contrary. Likewise, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also been active in project implementation and data acquisition/analysis. Choreographing the efforts of all stakeholders (including the citizenry) will be a major function of the MMRWMO.

